771 and only troubles those who have killed, rendering them, as is generally
774 believed, insane. — The nuru belief seems to be a compromise between
828 Animism and Dynamism. (See p. 77-80.)

5. There are in plants, animals, stones, hidden virtues which can be
789 either useful or harmful to man. Medicine-men (tinanga) possess a more or less esoteric knowledge of such, and magicians (bangoma), endowed with special powers, can acquire a control over these virtues and use them in medical art, or in magic. — This is true Dynamism.

6. Certain natural objects, such as the sea, the bush fire, are sometimes vaguely personified. — This is Animatism.

772 7. But above them all is Heaven, Tilo, which is sometimes looked on as a real being, sometimes as an impersonal power, a number of mysterious superstitions finding their explanation in this strange and perhaps obsolete notion of Heaven. — This is more than Animatism and seems to be a vague theistic, even monotheistic, idea.

771 The essential difference between Animism and Dynamism seems to
774 me clear. But it is by no means absolute. We shall often meet with rites which belong to both domains, or bear an intermediate character. In the following chapters the exact nature and influence of these various kinds of spirits and impersonal forces will be studied, and I hope that an explanation of all the facts concerning them will throw more light on the subject and show that, at any rate, Thonga Animism is very different from the Animism of the Dutch East Indies, for instance, where men speak of thousands of spirits of the earth, air, water, mountains and trees : very different also from the fetichism met with in other Bantu tribes of Central and Western Africa.

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82 Before leaving this chapter, in which I have tried to sketch what I have
789 called by the rather pretentious term of The Natural Philosophy of the Bantus, and as a preparation for the explanation of the religious and dynamistic rites described in the following chapters, I think it advisable to set forth the principles which seem to underlie most of these rites, and which may be called the *axioms of primitive mentality*.

As regards what are commonly called *magic rites* I contend that they are in no sense purely arbitrary but that they rest on certain definite principles. These axioms of primitive mentality are what anthropologists fittingly call collective representations, viz., everybody believes

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

them. Whatever may be their origin, they form a part of the mental make up of every Native. A careful study of the rites reveals at least three such axioms: Like acts on like and produces like; the part represents the whole and acts on the whole; the spoken wish produces the desired result.

1) *Like acts on like and produces like.* All the elements of Nature are dependent on each other, and if there is a similarity between two of them, they are at once brought into a special relation with each other and begin to influence each other. The application of this principle is universal, in the religious as well as in the dynamistic domain. The Native mind is extremely quick at perceiving a similarity between the most heterogeneous objects or phenomena, and immediately establishes a causal relation between them. We have already met with scores of instances of this law. *Colour* acts on colour; black sheep and black smoke produce a black cloud full of rain (p. 318). *Form* produces a similar form; a necklace of maize grains round the neck of a small-pox patient produces an eruption of small, transparent, pustules which are not dangerous, in place of the large, thick, deadly ones. (See Chapter III. A.) *Disintegration* produces disintegration; the chewing of a bean ensures the melting of the iron ore in the kiln (p. 359). *A certain state of mind* produces a similar condition in living beings, and even in material phenomena; the continence of little children ensures control over the flame of the furnace (p. 115) whilst the passion of married people accelerates disease, and increases the fury of wild beasts, (p. 61) etc. (1)

This kind of magic has been called *imitative magic.* A corollary of this principle is that the image or object representing a thing is in close relation with the thing itself, and any action performed on the image will have its repercussion on the thing represented.

(1) To show how far this action of like on like can go, let me quote this final example which I gave in my paper on *The Magic Conception of Nature amongst Bantus (South African Journal of Science*, Nov. 1920). A magician has had the good luck to discover a crow's nest full of young. He climbs up the tree, and ties all the little birds together by their feet. The mother crow, however, is not at a loss to deliver her progeny. She brings each day a leaf taken from different trees, and places it in the nest. The magician keeps watch. He climbs the tree, looks at the leaf, and recognizes the tree from which it has been taken. He then goes and digs up a piece of root from that tree. After a few days he will have collected quite a bundle of different roots. By that time the little crows will be free, the string which bound them having given way, or having rotted, and the magician will possess a medicine of first rate quality. By means of it he will be able to free any patient from any disease or worry by which he is held fast.

82 789 2) *The portion of a complexus acts on the whole.* The elements of Nature are considered as forming complexuses in which the component parts are united in such a manner that they react on each other. The body forms such a complexus ; an isolated organ can therefore act on the whole body or replace it. (See the case of the trumpet of heaven (p. 314) which is the femur of the bird of lightning and which is used to expel the thunderstorm). But there are much more complicated complexuses, for instance the village, muti. When death strikes its chief or any of its members, everything is contaminated (I. p. 143). Material contact is of paramount importance here ; but more spiritual considerations are also taken into account in establishing these complexuses. Why is it the first wife of the hunter who must shut herself up in the hut in order to save her husband from the fury of the hippopotamus (p. 69)? Because she is united to him by a mysterious tie, being the lawful, true wife (I. p. 284). The community of life is more complete between her and her husband than between the hunter and his minor wives. For this reason, I prefer to call this form of magic *communionist magic* rather than sympathetic magic, the term generally employed. In many magic rites imitative magic and communionist magic are combined.

3) *The words in which a wish is emphatically expressed produce the desired result.* Primitive man in the hierarchic form of his social group, is accustomed to command and to be obeyed. He attaches great importance to his word, and intends natural forces to accomplish his will as well as his subordinates. This may be one of the reasons for the prevalence of this kind of magic, which has inspired incantations, imprecations, etc. There are no doubt other reasons, and the forms of verbal magic are numerous.

It is evident that we cannot assign any scientific value to any of these axioms of primitive mentality. They are absolutely false. It is not true in actual life that like produces like, that the part acts on the whole, and that the expressed wish produces the desired result. The magic rite may be attended with some objective result in as much as its performance gives the performer greater confidence in himself, thus producing an auto-suggestion favourable to the success of the operation. Moreover the magician develops certain subliminal powers which are not yet well understood but which are real and may be effective (especially in the domain of divination). But magic rites are utterly irrational ; they are doomed to disappear before the advance of Civilization and Science.

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821 ETHNOMETEOROLOGY--ideas about night and day, dawn and twilight, rising and setting of the sun, phases of the moon, eclipses, solstices and equinoxes, and the succession of seasons; notions about heavenly bodies (e.g., sun, moon, stars, constellations, planets, comets, meteorites); ideas about meteorological phenomena (e.g., clouds and fog, frosts and drought, rain and snow, ice, hail and sleet, winds and whirlwinds, storms, thunder and lightning, rainbow, parhelion and aurora); associated behavior patterns (e.g., greeting the dawn, dispelling an eclipse); etc. See also:

Climate 132
Navigation 602
Reaction to disasters 731
Magical weather control 780
Ordering of time 906
Cosmology 772
Nature spirits and gods 778
Omens and astrology 787
Development of scientific astronomy and meteorology 816
Association of lunation with menstruation . . 841

846 751 them till they burn. The smoke then rises, and he exposes the child to it for a long time : the body, face, nose and mouth. The baby begins to cry ; he sneezes, he coughs : this is just what is 825 278 wanted. Then the doctor takes what remains of the pieces of skin, grinds them, makes a powder, mixes it with *tihuhlu* (1) 856 grease of the year before last and consequently hard enough to make an ointment. With this ointment he rubs the whole body of the child, especially the joints, which he extends gently in order to assist the baby's growth.

846 751 853 All this fumigation and manipulation is intended to act as a preventive. Having been thus exposed to all external dangers, dangers which are represented by the beasts of the bush, the child may go out of the hut. He is now able "to cross the foot prints of wild beasts" (tjemakanya mitila) without harm. Snakes will not bite him, at any rate their bite will not hurt him ; lions will not kill him. The remainder of the powder is put into a little bit of reed closed at both ends, which the mother has to carry with her during the whole nursing period in order to continue the treatment.

846 755 783 921 This rite of the broken pot is also the great preventive remedy against the much dreaded ailment of babies, *convulsions*. If a child suffers from this, they will say : "a tlalile shirengelen," viz. "he did not find any help in the broken pot" and the parents will go to another doctor whose drugs are more powerful, to have the child once more exposed to the smoke. It may even be that a grown-up man will undergo this treatment again, if he has been ill with convulsions, but, in this case, the broken pot with its pieces of skin is put on the head of the patient, which has been first covered with a wisp of cuscuta (hare dja yendjeyendje). The great aim of all the medication of children by the "milombyana" is also to fight against convulsions, as we shall see (2).

(1) The tihuhlu are the seeds of the nkuhlu tree known under the name of mafureira. They are oleaginous and the fat (mafura) obtained from them is very much used for external applications amongst the Thongas.

(2) In *Savage Childhood* p. 12, Dudley Kidd describes this "baptism of smoke" amongst Zulus. Some dirt is scraped from the father's body and is mixed with other drugs in order to impart to the child his ancestral spirit. Another ingredient

842 The Thonga child is always received into this world with great joy by the whole family. If it is a girl, it means oxen to buy a wife for one of the sons later on ; therefore it means increase not only in the wealth but in the number of the members of the family. If it is a boy, there is no direct material enrichment, but the clan has been strengthened and the name of the father is glorified and perpetuated. In the case of the birth of a first-born child (ñwana wa matibula), a special ceremony is performed at the end of the first week. When the grandmother has smeared the hut, she goes home, summons all the female relatives, sometimes as many as ten or fifteen ; they take with them food, ochre and fat prepared for this purpose. Two or three men accompany them. They enter the village of the child executing a special dance called *khana*, and singing the following song (which is the proper song to glorify a first-born) :

846 539 851 603

I celebrate my pot which has done *ngelebendje*...

They compare the child with a pot of clay which has gone through the firing process. It has been tried as one always tries a pot by letting it fall to the ground ; but it is not shattered, because it has not cracked in the furnace, it has kept intact ! This is what is meant by the descriptive adverb ngelebendje.

846 851 603 Then they smear the baby, the mother, the father, everybody in the village with ochre. It is a great feast. A goat will be killed, if possible, because the father and mother have "found a village" (kuma muti) by the child, they have "grown roots" (mila mitju). This is a law, but its omission is not taboo. When the grandparents do not perform this ceremony, it is an insult to the parents of the child, but no evil consequence will follow.

765 753 821 is a meteorite ground to fine powder. It is interesting to compare this use of the meteorite with the fact that, amongst the Thongas, this fumigation is intended to prevent convulsions. Convulsions, as we shall see (Part VI. Chap. II. B) are caused by the mysterious power of Heaven. The meteorite has fallen from Heaven. Thus the baptism of smoke aims at bringing the child under the influence of the two main elements of Bantu religion : the ancestor gods and Heaven.

787 Amongst the Ba-Ronga the ill-omen is not considered so serious.
782 Later on, when the child loses his first teeth, he must not
856 let them fall out hap-hazard anywhere. He must take the fallen tooth, go to the ash-heap, put his finger into the hole and say : "Kokwa, kokwa, ndji hwe hobe !" (Grandfather, grandfather, give me a grain of maize !) Then he throws the tooth over his shoulder on to the ashes and goes home without looking backward. Should he look backward, his grandfather (the spirit of the departed ?) would not give him a new tooth (!). This custom is no longer taboo and is disappearing.

856 When a younger brother cuts his teeth, they are considered
163 as pushing away or pulling out the teeth of the elder, as the younger brother comes into the world, as a rule, three years after the elder.

As regards *hair*, the first cutting is accompanied by the following
302 custom : the mother sprinkles some drops of her milk on the
856 forehead and on the occiput of the child ; then she cuts his hair and throws it away in the midst of thick grass. When she cuts her own hair, she always leaves a lock on both sides of the head for the amusement of the child, till he is able to walk.

853 Nursing women very often anoint themselves with ochre. This is said to be in order to prevent their husbands from having relations with them.

These rites are not considered as very important. But there are three others which are most punctiliously observed, and which divide the nursing period into three subperiods : the presentation to the moon, after three months, the tying of the cotton string, after one year, and the weaning ceremonies at the close of the period.

4) The presentation to the moon (ku yandla).

821 The appearance of the new moon is always received with cheers by the Ba-Ronga. The first person who sees it shouts :

(!) Comparative Ethnography : I remember quite well that, when I was a boy, we were told in Neuchâtel that we must not let a broken tooth get lost, lest it should be found by a dog and a dog's tooth would grow in its stead !

821 "Kengelekezeeeee!" and this exclamation is repeated from one village to another. *Kenge* is the descriptive adverb which means the form of the crescent of the moon. Each "moon," or month, is considered as being a new one, the old one having died, and there were special names for each month of the year (See Part VI).

[841] As soon as the mother of the child has resumed her menses
856 (the menses are called tinwheti, months) and this happens as
828 a rule on the third month after the delivery amongst Thonga
821 women, she takes her garments, washes them, puts on new
852 clothing and then proceeds to the ceremony of the *yandla*. The child must be "given his month." This is done in the following way. The day the new moon appears, the mother takes with her a torch or merely a brand from the fire and the grandmother follows her carrying the child : both go to the ash-heap behind the hut. There the mother throws the burning stick towards the moon and the grandmother flings the child into the air saying : "This is your moon!" (hweti ya ku hi yoleyo) : then she puts the child on to the ashes. The little one cries and rolls over in the dirt on the ash-heap. Then his mother snatches him up (wutla), nurses him, and they go home.

This ceremony, which is certainly a rite of passage, is said to "open the chest of the child" otherwise "his ears would die," he would remain stupid. When a child is not intelligent, it is usual to say to him : You have not been shown your moon! (1)

852 Therefore the *yandla* means a progress made by the child,
846 the entrance into a new phase of his existence. The fact is
854 emphasised by the three following changes which take place on the day of the yandla : 1) Henceforth his father is allowed to take the child in his arms. Up to that day, this was taboo, as the child being continually with his mother was perhaps polluted by the dangerous blood following the birth ; but now she has washed her clothing and has been purified by the reappearance of the menses ; so the danger no longer exists. 2) It is now

(1) However the name of the child's month is soon forgotten and is never afterwards recalled. This seems to show that the custom is dying out, as well as the knowledge of the names of the various months.

851 remain there till it falls to pieces. After this operation the
766 child is "grown up" and three things are allowed which were
833 taboo before :

1) The child, if he dies, can be buried on the hill, in dry soil. Before the *boha puri* he would have been buried in wet soil, near the river, as is customary with twins and children who have cut their upper teeth first.

2) He can participate in the strange purification called *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place after the death of one of the inhabitants of the village (See ceremonies of death).

852 3) The parents can again have conjugal intercourse, though
766 they must avoid conception till the child is weaned. Before this
839 ceremony it was absolutely prohibited, and should they have
821 sinned in this respect and the mother have conceived, they would
842 be very guilty! It is a dangerous taboo! They would have "stolen" the child, stolen it from the law (yiba nawen). The child would not have "entered the law." It would be useless to tie the string round him in order to repair the evil done. Should he live long, should he even become an old man, he will have to be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain would be prevented from falling.

Amongst the Malulekes and the Hlengwes such children are even burnt after their death. We shall speak later on about the mysterious relation established by the Thongas between these children, their burial, and the rain.

852 Amongst the Ba-Ronga this rite is called *boha nshale* (to tie
854 the cotton) and can be performed in the same way or even more simply by the father (Annotatio 3).[2] Parents, when they have duly tied the string on the little one, are said to have *fuya ñwana*, viz. taken possession of the child.

Amongst them again, another thing is then allowed which was taboo before. The child can be carried on the shoulders without ntehe by the arms alone (hi minkono).

851 It is clear that the tying of the cotton string means the official reception of the child into the family, even into human society. Before that, he was hardly considered as a human being, he was *shilo* (a thing), *khuna* (an incomplete being). Now he is *nkulu*,

2 [See p. 516 in these categories or in 116 -- Analyst]

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881/361 schools during two consecutive years. The first is called *bulika*, the second *buhwira*. Thongas have only the first, and it is the one described in the following pages.

I was never fortunate enough to penetrate into a lodge, as it is a great taboo. I tried once to obtain admittance, near Shiluvane, but in vain. But the rites have been described to me with such a wealth of detail that I seemed to have lived for three months with the candidates ! (1)

A French anthropologist, Mr A. van Gennep, published some years ago a book on *Les Rites de Passage* (Paris. Nourry 1909) which throws a great deal of light on these mysterious customs. He shows that a great number of rites have been inspired by the idea of passage from one place to another, and that all the rites belonging to this category present the same general features : in the first place the separation from the old state of things is symbolised by certain rites which he calls separation rites ; then begins a period of margin, where the individual or the group concerned is secluded from society and submitted to a number of taboos or rites ; thirdly, at the close of this period, the persons who have been tabooed are again received into the community as regular members by the aggregation rites. This classification applies perfectly to the Circumcision rites, which are a Rite of Passage par excellence, and I shall now try to explain them briefly in their natural sequence. For more details see *Zidji*, a South African novel which I published in 1910 (Foyer solidariste, Saint-Blaise, Switzerland) where a more elaborate description will be found.

3) The three series of rites of circumcision.

a) Separation rites.

821/881 The circumcision school (Ngoma) is held every fourth or fifth year, and all the boys from ten to sixteen are sent to it by their

(1) A young colleague of mine, the Rev. A. Jaquier was more fortunate than I and even succeeded in taking some photographs in the Masume Valley, near Shiluvane. This was a Pedi school, but, as stated above, there is no great difference between Pedi and Thonga " Sungi. " These pictures are of great interest, and I am grateful to my friend for allowing me to reproduce them here.

821 parents. Some may escape, but if they happen to be at hand on
881 the next occasion, they will be included by consent or by force.
304 Even an adult member of the tribe can be compelled to go through the initiation, if he is found in the country in an uncircumcised state. The *time of year* chosen for the opening of the school is a month during which the morning star appears, in winter. *Ngongomela*, Venus, is the herald of the day. She precedes the sun, so she must lead the boys to their new life, from darkness to the light! (Valdo)

643 One day all the candidates are gathered in the capital ; for this
881 school is the business of the chief, and has been arranged by the council of the headmen (tinduna) over which he presides ; he has the supervision of it, and will receive the fees from the initiated later on. Boys circumcised four years ago must also attend the whole school as shepherds (barisi, psitjiba), namely as servants of the men and watchers over the candidates. They have already partly built the lodge outside the village, in a remote place, not too far away however, because the women must bring food each day for all the inmates of the " yard of mysteries ".

881 After having slept in the capital, early in the morning, when Ngongomela rises in the East, the band of the uncircumcised *goes out* from the inhabited world to the wilderness, to the lodge. This is the first separation rite. The second is this : they find on the road a fire made of strongly scented wood ; when they smell the smoke, they must jump over it. This rite is called : Tlula ritsa, to jump over the firebrand.

533 Later on, when still at some distance from the newly built
881 lodge, they hear a great noise, a song accompanied by the beating of drums and blowing of antelope horns. They must not understand the meaning of the words which are sung by the host of shepherds and the men, as it would frighten them too much :

The little boy cries ! Bird of the winter !

881 Here they are halted. Eight of them are chosen and told to go forward. Each one is given an assagai, and they are pushed between the singers, who hold sticks and stand facing each other

621 own huts to protect them against would-be-witches. In this way
754 many villages are broken up by fear of witchcraft. Generally
596 speaking the Thonga village cannot long remain of any considerable size; it tends to fall to pieces.

But there are other causes which may destroy the village and the idyllic life of the small community. The death of the headman, and lightning striking the village, are the two main causes which may bring about this event.

765 *Death of the headman.* There is a mystic tie between this man
596 and the social organism which is under him. Should he die,
621 the village dies also... It is not abandoned at once. The whole
787 year of mourning will elapse before the moving. But as soon as the widows and property have been distributed, the successor of the deceased will go and found his own village and the old one will remain a ruin (rumbi). Should any one else die, his hut will merely be thrown into the bush and the village will not be abandoned. But should these deaths increase, then the divinatory bones may order the place to be deserted, as it is defiled and dangerous.

821 If *lightning* strikes the hubo, it is a very bad omen. The
756 medicine man who has the power to "treat the place struck by
787 lightning" is called in. Should he be able to exhume from the
621 ground the mysterious bird which causes lightning, or at least the coagulated urine which it has deposited, and which is called Heaven (See Part VI), the people are allowed to stay. But if he does not discover it deep down in the soil, the village must move, as the presence of the mysterious power of Heaven inside the circle of huts would bring disaster. This is a taboo.

621 Another cause of moving is the *exhaustion of the gardens.* When
787 the fields are "tired" (karala) and do not produce sufficient food
596 for the inhabitants, they leave the place and look for pastures new. In that case the bones will be consulted. Sometimes, even, the village may be transported elsewhere for the sole reason that the people are tired of the place and want to change. If the bones confirm their wishes, they will move.

621 *The founding of a new village* is the occasion of most interesting
596 and characteristic rites, which afford us a new [illegible]

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of building will be stopped at once and the little community will find another place to move! Moreover the guilty woman will have to ask the principal wife for forgiveness. 2) A second great taboo is this : — No one must wash his body during the whole "buhlapfa", as this might cause the rain to fall and it would interfere with the building operations.

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5) The building of the huts begins immediately, each man making the circular wall first. When all the walls are ready,

Carrying a roof.

the *roofs are carried* from the old village to the new by all the men together. They lift each roof on to their shoulders, after having removed the old grass, and go out of the village, not by the main entrance, but by one of the back gates which has been widened for the purpose. A broad road has been prepared through the bush. They follow it, marching as fast as they can, and singing the obscene songs which are reserved for special occasions (see Part VI). In these they insult the women who accompany them, carrying the baskets, the mortars, the pestles. "The village is broken in pieces, so are the ordinary laws. The insults which are taboo are now allowed" (Mboza). This suspension of morality in speech is only allowed on the day when roofs are carried to the new village. Some days later, again, the women will take their revenge when they smear the floor of the huts ; then they too will sing their songs, insulting the men. But

539 There is quite a collection of these carriers' songs praising the chiefs. Mzila (or Muzila), whom we saw a short time back scaring sparrows, is here compared to the mythical lightning bird, to the hawk that swoops down from the clouds. (See Part VI.) Why does he not once for all annihilate the sparrows which pillage his fields of sorghum ? But this is poetry! and there is often a wide gap between poetry and reality!

d) The feasting of the chief in the villages.

796 273 643 The fourth and final act of the bukanye feasting in which, as we have seen, the chief plays a prominent part, is the *nsungi* which may be called the "fin de saison" orgy. The chief now returns the visits of his subjects and casks of beer are prepared for him in every village. Dancing and singing are in full swing. He is fêted and acclaimed! But the makanye are getting over-ripe ; a new month, a new moon is at hand, which is called *sibandlela* "she who closes the roads ;" the paths leading to the foot of the trees become almost impassable, owing to the grass which grows to an incredible height during the rains prevailing at this season. The fine weather is over. Winter is knocking at the door.

796 789 643 262 831 Amongst the Nkunas the luma ceremony called "to eat the new year" (dyaka ñwaka) is performed with a special pumpkin (kwembe) cooked at the capital together with the medicine used for rain-making. The chief first eats of it in the evening and makes the sign of a cross on the big drum, which is then beaten to call the people in his village. Then all the men come, bringing the little horns in which they keep the rain medicine (See Part VI). They eat a little and smear the rim of these horns with the medicine ; the horns also must "eat the new year." Then everybody can enjoy the products of the harvest. Should anyone precede the chief, this would be fatal to the latter or make him ill... Such is the testimony of Mankhelu. I suspect these rites to have been influenced by the proximity of the Ba-Pedi. "Now we have no longer any first fruits' feast (mulumo)," says Mankhelu with some melancholy. "White people have killed it. Everybody

eats freely in his house according to his good pleasure. Formerly we used to take the oxen of the man who had dared to steal the new year."

Conclusion on the luma rite.

All these luma rites[1] of first fruits seem to have primarily a *religious origin*. The Bantus do not feel that they dare enjoy the products of the soil unless they have first given a portion of them to their gods. Is it not these gods who make the cereals grow ? Have they not the power even of controlling the wizards who bewitch the fields ? These rites are also evidently dictated by the *sense of hierarchy*. A subject must not precede his chief nor a younger brother the elder in the use of the new harvest, else they would kill those in authority. Such an act is against order. We shall see that, even when the seeds are sown, the elders must take precedence. But the custom seems also to have been actuated by the idea of *passage*. There is a passage from one year to another. For the Thongas, I think the new year begins twice every year : it begins when tilling recommences, in July, August, when the heat returns. This is the hlobo. It begins a second time at harvest, and then there is passage from the food of the last year to the food of this year. This is the nguba (Ro.) or ñwaka (Dj.). Though the luma rites do not bear all the characteristics of a true passage rite, like those of circumcision or moving, we may observe in the luma of bukanye a kind of marginal period of general licence, when the ordinary laws are more or less suspended. The taking of a first mouthful probably signifies the aggregation to the new period, the magical powder used on this occasion being a protective measure to shield them from the calamities of this unknown year... And after all, is it not that feeling of fear which so easily takes possession of the heart of man when entering on a new state and starting something fresh, which has led the savage to surround the use of the first fruit with so many ritual precautions ?

IV. *Taxation.*

The chief governs (fuma). *Fuma* means to command, but also to live in plenty, to be rich. The subject (nandja, follower) obeys ; he follows the chief who marches before him just as the

[1] [See pp. 394-404 in these categories as in 116--Analyst]

Its first cousin, the *kwakwa* (dji-ma), is of the same shape and size, but, when ripening, becomes quite an orange yellow; it is never eaten uncooked. The pulp surrounding the stones is prepared in a certain way and made into strips (nhasa, yi-tin), which are hung on the trees to dry or over the fire to be smoked; this is what is called *nfuma*. Once the *nfuma* is dried, it can be pounded and made into a flour much valued when the storehouses are empty, and the new season has not yet begun. 222 252

The sala and the kwakwa are two species of the genus Strychnos (Strychnos spinosa and ungasha) which furnishes chemists and poisoners with the well-known drug strychnine. Does the fruit contain any proportion of this substance? I do not know. It has never been known to kill any one, although it may be the cause of many intestinal troubles which naturally result when the Natives, having no more maize or sweet potatoes, live on nothing but this particular fruit. Strange to say, the kwakwa stones are credited with the power of attracting lightning; the old women say that, when making *nfuma*, these large white stones must never be allowed to lie in a heap in the open air: lightning would surely strike the village were any such imprudence committed. It is a taboo. 222 137 821

I have already described the *nkanye* (mu-mi), (Sclerocarya caffra, Kafir plum), which is certainly the most highly valued of all the trees in Thongaland (I. p. 398). The fruit is used primarily and essentially for the brewing of bukanye, by pressing the pulp, but the kernels of the stones of the nkanye are also much appreciated; they are very oleaginous and a modicum of oil may be obtained by merely squeezing them between the fingers! They are called *mongo*, and the saying is that they are food for kings, for the stones are very hard, the kernels very small and it is hard work to obtain even a small quantity! Not that there is any lack of stones! Heaps, which have been thrown away at the time of the famous bukanye brewing, are to be found in the vicinity of all villages, but the cracking is the difficulty. For this a stone must be sought, far and wide, and small hollows must be made in it of a size to fit the circular nkanye stones; these are then inserted in the sockets and cracked by a sharp skilful blow with another stone, 222 252

343 or in small storehouses hung to the branches of trees (mfunge). When the harvest has been plentiful and all the storehouses have been filled, then begins the happy time of winter, of beer drinking, *bunanga* playing, (I. p. 431) paying visits, etc.

II. *Agricultural taboos.*

241 784 The first category of agricultural taboos are those previously mentioned, which spring from the idea of *hierarchy* : the prohibition to sow pumpkin seeds before the elder members of the family, the prohibition to enjoy the first-fruits (Kafir corn, bukanye, etc.) before the gods, the chief, the headman, and the elder brothers have *luma* (I, p. 394). Others belong to the *special feminine taboos*, (girls not allowed to walk amongst the pumpkins, to pluck their fruit or to pick their leaves without certain precautions, I. p. 184). Another category is that of *shimusi*. Certain days are proclaimed by the chief, or fixed by custom, as sabbath days, on which no one is allowed to till the soil. In Ñwamba, when there has been a little rain, it is taboo for the people of the clan to work in the fields ; they must remain 241 at home. Amongst the Nkunas the day on which the new 754 moon appears is also shimusi. The moon must be left to "become 784 firm" (tiyela, hola) ; to cut roots while it is still "soft" is taboo : it would cause strong winds and hail. Complete rest is also 821 customary in Khosen the day following the birth of twins. (See Part VI. Chap. II). Some other taboos are due to the fear of *wizards* : it is forbidden to whistle in the fields after having sown or until the mealies are grown. This would call the "baloyi" and endanger the harvest.

241 784 It is a taboo for a woman to remain in a standing position when she borrows a living ember (woka) from people cooking their food in their gardens ; she must sit down when she takes the ember. Should she break this law, it would cause the mealies of the owners of that garden to be burnt (psha) ; the women has "crossed their gardens" (tjemakanya). If however she does this, they

177 attain to the happy state of drunkenness in which they so much
273 delight, and which is not allowed by the regulations of the Compounds.

A number of other drinks have been invented by the South African Natives, but the foregoing are the principal.

See in the Practical Conclusions, I, at the end of the Volume, my remarks on "Alcoholism and the South African Tribe."

E. LIVE STOCK BREEDING.

I. *Oxen.*

231 Oxen were plentiful in Thongaland before the Zulu invasion ; the Ba-Ngoni warriors stole and killed them wholesale. They have never been so numerous since then, and in 1910 they were fewer than ever, owing to cattle plague and to Texas Fever, which has destroyed the herds in the Transvaal and in the greater part of the Lourenço Marques district. Oxen are not the property of chiefs only. Any *numzane* can possess a kraal, *ranga* dji-ma (Ro.), *shibaya* (Dj.), where he keeps not only his own cattle but those entrusted to his care. Having plenty of boys to herd them, he readily accepts the cows which his neighbours ask him to look after, all the more so as the milk will be his, and he will be given one of the calves, according to custom (I. p. 440). Much care is taken of the welfare of the cattle : the herding-boys are expected to lead them to pasture in the
[821] morning, when the dew is still on the grass ; during the five or six winter months hardly any rain falls, but heavy morning dew replaces it, moistening the grass, and Natives firmly believe that it makes the cattle fat. So it is said that the oxen must go out early and "eat the dew." (Compare the tale of Piti, *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, p. 156.) Moreover the best kinds of grass, those which are the most nourishing, are well known, and the boys are sent to the places where they grow. Parts

262 784 were shrimps in it, he disdainfully refused to take his share. — "We are Ba-Ngoni! We do not eat fish," he said with disgust. First, shrimps are not fish ; he was "plus royaliste que le roi!" Second, he did not abstain from the sauce because it had an unpleasant flavour ; it was more tasty than ever! But the *social idea* dictated his attitude. He boasted of belonging to a superior race. He was not like these wretched Ba-Thonga who eat fish! It would be lowering himself to partake of such a meal, so he preferred to fast.

I witnessed the same scene when we were distributing cakes to our school children in Lourenço Marques. One of the girls was the daughter of a pure Ronga woman and an Indian Mussulman. She inquired if the cakes had been cooked with lard. The cakes were excellent, and she found them so, nevertheless she refused to eat them if they contained lard, because her father was not allowed to eat pork. It is evident that there is but one step from this clan repulsion, which is still a nyenya, to a definite taboo. Let the boy or girl *fear* that some evil will happen to them, because they have transgressed a sacred rule, and the nyenya will become a yila. Let it be admitted by them that the transgression of the rule may bring death to the family or the clan, and the primitive individual feeling of disgust will be transformed into the most severe collective taboo. I can quote no instance in proof of this evolution, as we have no knowledge of the past history of the taboos. From the psychological point of view, however, this process is quite within the range of possibility.

III. *Fishing.*

226 821 There are no particular restrictions to fishing so long as it is carried on by *hooks*. Any one can go with his boat on the river, the lake, or the sea, and throw his line into the water. The fisherman will then say : "Thu! (not the sacramental tsu, but only an onomatopœia describing the fall of the hook into the water). You! my hook! they eat to their heart's content, people who dwell yonder, where they pound their mealies kneeling down (bugimamusi), there where the khwekhwe and the mhulu are, etc. (names of different kinds of fish)." Afterwards the fisher throws a pinch of tobacco on the spot where his hook

fell, not as an offering to the gods, but in order to help his hook 226
to see (hanyanyisa), to awaken it and "give it eyes to catch." This 821
sentence referring to the place "where people pound their mealies standing, or kneeling down," is an allusion to a curious cosmographic notion, which we shall explain later on (Part VI. Chap. I). Seeing the sky reflected in the water, the fisherman thinks of the ends of the earth, where heaven rests on the ground, and where women are obliged to kneel down when crushing their mealies, lest their pestles hit the sky!

There are three other principal methods of fishing, and, as they 226
are more or less of a collective nature, they are regulated by 784
laws and attended with taboos : the nhangu, the shibaba and the tjeba.

The *nhangu* is a triangular enclosure made of sticks stuck in the sand on the seashore. This enclosure has an opening looking seaward. The tide covers the nhangu, bringing with it all kinds of denizens of the sea, big lobsters, shrimps of all sizes, fish, etc ; when it retires, all these creatures are imprisoned in the nhangu, and try to find their way out through the opening ; this however is closed, and the fishers collect their catch, which is sometimes considerable. A man who wishes to build a nhangu must pay a tax to the chief of the country. During the operation he must observe the law of silence ; if anyone should speak to him, he must not answer. When the nhangu is ready he goes straight to his hut, and washes his hands, and then he can speak again. Should he transgress this taboo, the fish will rush about wildly in the trap and he will be unable to catch it. This is not a *kunga* proper (I. p. 124) but only another application of the rule imposed for example on the wife of the hippopotamus-hunter (II. p. 69). On the day of inauguration, (khangula), all the inhabitants have the right to come and partake of the result of the first fishing. This is a *luma*, the luma of the nhangu. The owner of the trap is not allowed to take a single fish home that day. Everything must be consumed on the spot.

The *shibaba* is another kind of trap, made of woven reeds, 226
which is placed on the banks of a river, of the Nkomati, for 834
instance, near the sea, within the tidal reach ; when the tide is

772 is called *bugimamusi*, a curious word of the bu-ma class, the prefix *bu* meaning a place, viz., the place where the women can lean their pestles against the vault, (whilst everywhere else pestles must be leant against a wall or a tree). This expression is sometimes further explained by the following words : "Lomu ba kandjaka na ba khisamile" — "Where women pound their mealies on their knees ;" they cannot stand erect, or their pestles would strike against the vault! This vault rests on the earth, which is often called *libala*, viz., the great plain. On what does the earth itself rest? This question does not seem to trouble the Thonga mind and I never heard an answer to it. In this respect it may be said, in excuse for the African Natives, that the ancient Greeks, with all their intellectual ability, were not much in advance of them. Some people escape the difficulty by asserting that the earth is infinite, viz., that it is endlessly prolonged downwards and has no bottom. — In the next chapter we shall see that *Tilo*, heaven, is, for the Thongas, not only the material firmament which rests on the earth, but a spiritual principle which plays a considerable part in the religious conceptions of the tribe.

772 The *sun* (dambu, dji-ma) is never personified, nor worshipped.
821 This word is perhaps related to Nyambe of the Ba-Rotse, Nzambi of the Vili, and a number of other similar words which are names of God. But if there was ever a time when the sun was regarded as a personal being, the notion has now entirely faded away. On the seashore, in the Makaneta district, according to Mboza, people believe that the sun emerges from the water. The reflection of light which remains on the sea, after the appearance of the sun, is considered as a kind of source of light from which the sun emerges and renews itself every morning : it is "cut out from the provision of fire," adheres to heaven, follows its course and *dies* in the West. To-morrow another sun will come out from the "provision," and so on. But others object to this explanation and assert that the sun passes under the earth and comes back the following day : so there is only one sun. To this theory the first retort that the earth having no bottom, the sun cannot pass under it !

000 The dawn is called *mpundju* ; then comes *tlhabela sana*, the

The dawn is called *mpundju*; then comes *hhabela sana*, the 805
time when the rays of the sun (sana) are piercing ; *hisa ka sana*, 821
when they are burning ; *nhlekanhi*, the middle of the sky, or *shitakataka*, the maximum point of the heat ; then *ndjenga* (Dj.), or *lihungu* (Ro.), the afternoon, the time when the sun goes down (renga) ; *ku pela* or *ku hlwa*, when it reaches the horizon, and *mpimabayeni* (Dj.) the twilight, literally "the time when you do not easily recognize strangers coming to your village because it grows dark." These are the divisions of the day (siku). Then comes the night (busiku).

Eclipses do not seem to have ever much impressed the 821
imagination of the Thongas. At any rate, they never caused panics (Mboza). When, warned that an eclipse will take place, they see that, indeed, the sun or moon is "turning dark" (dji yentsha ntima), Natives are more struck with wonder at the supernatural knowledge of the White people, than with fear of the phenomenon itself.

I have already dealt with the notion of the *year*, (lembe, dji-ma), 805
which is very vague ; it begins at two different periods : that of 821
tilling and that of harvesting the first fruits (I, p. 396, II, p. 20). Thongas do not make any difference between a solar and a lunar year, their knowledge of months being very imperfect, as we shall shortly see.

Before leaving the source of light, I may add that the *light* 821
itself is called *ku bonekisa* (Ro.), or *ku bonakala* (Dj.), litt. that 822
which makes to appear. Of course Natives have no explanation to give of it. Moonlight is called by another name, viz. *nweti*, connected with hweti, moon. *Colours* are very imperfectly perceived, at least if we are to base our judgment on the vocabulary. *Ntima* means both black and dark blue. *Libungu* is carmine, red, purple, and also yellow. Yellow is not perceived as a distinct colour. *Psuka* is the tinge of dawn, and of the rising sun. *Nkushe*, which means sea-weed, is applied to the *blue* sky ; *nkwalala* is grey, *lihlaza* (Ro.) is green, the green of grass in the spring, and the [231]
corresponding term in Djonga is *rilambyana*, that which makes dogs howl. Very green grass has this effect on Native dogs.

The *moon* (nhweti (Dj.), hweti (Ro.) cl. yi-tin), was perhaps 821
personified in former times, as it bears the feminine suffix *eti*,

821 which is also met with in *nyeleti* (star) and in the names of certain rivers. (I. p. 36.) At the present time there is no trace of worship or of mythological conceptions in connection with it. Natives see in its spots a woman carrying a shirundju basket or a bundle of sticks, but they do not attach to that image more importance than we do when we talk of the man in the moon.

821 527 241 I have described (I. p. 52) how the new moon is received with exclamations of joy : in the villages the first person who sees it shouts : "Kengelekezeeee,"—"the Crescent! the Crescent!" and this word is passed on from one village to another, and dancers rejoice because they will have moonlight to illuminate their feasts! Such is, at least, the reason now given by the Rongas for this custom. There were perhaps other ideas connected with the new moon in former times. — According to a Nkuna informant the day of the new moon is a *shimusi*, a day of rest. It is taboo to till the fields and cut the roots of the trees with a hoe. The moon must be left to become firm (tiyela). It is still tender as a new born child. Destroying winds might

821 787 828 blow and hail fall if this taboo were transgressed. — The appearance of the crescent was also carefully examined, says the same informant. If its horns were turned towards the earth, this showed that there was nothing to fear, all the dangers contained in this month had been poured out : "mafumo ma hangalakile" — "the assagais were dispersed." On the contrary, if the horns were turned towards heaven, this showed that the moon was full of weapons and misfortunes. — The new moon is of great importance in the customs connected with exorcism and possession, as every exorcist must undergo the *haza* purification at each new moon (Chapter III). Moreover Thongas, like many civilised people, also believe that some persons at this time have an attack of madness which is called *rihuhe ra ñhweti*, the lunar madness.

772 821 When the first quarter appears, the moon is said to *thwaza*, a Zulu word which corresponds to *tjhama* in Thonga, and is very much used in the terminology of possession. Eight days later, it is said to *basa*, to be white or brilliant ; full moon is said to *sima* or to *lata batjongwana*, to put the little children to bed, because when it rises, it finds them already sleeping on their mats.

The wane is called *ku shwela dambo* : the moon is then found by the rising sun to be still in the sky, not having yet dipped below the horizon. When, at last, it disappears, it is *munyama*, the obscurity; the moon is said *to fa*, to have died. Is this meant figuratively, as is often the case with the word ku fa, or do the Thongas really think that each moon dies and is replaced by a new moon? It is difficult to say ; most of them believe in an actual destruction and a new creation of the moon each month (Timotheo), and this would explain why they have the same word for moon and month ; they evidently identify the two ideas. Some, however, told me that they believed it to be the same celestial body which appeared anew each month. 772 821

Spoon, who is endowed with a very vivid imagination, believed that the sun and the moon have a race each month : the moon when it first appears is not yet firm (a yi si tiyela), like a new born child, so its light is feeble ; it is dominated by the sun ; but it grows and fights. When it is full, the sun sees "that now it is the moon!" : it is something to be reckoned with! During the second half of the month, as it decreases, it lingers in the sky and the sun soon overtakes it again and compels it to pass behind. Then the moon is entirely vanquished! How far these were Spoon's personal explanations or generally accepted ideas, I could not say. The term *shwela*, applied to the last quarter and meaning : "to be surprised in the morning" (See Ch. III), seems to convey a similar idea, and it is probable that Spoon rightly interpreted the ancient ideas of the tribe.

Each moon, being new, bears a special name. These names of the months, or moons, are now almost completely forgotten, at least in the Southern clans. This is indeed curious, when we think of the custom of presenting little children to the moon and telling them the name of their month (I. p. 53). This rite ought to have prevented the names from becoming obsolete. In the Northern clans they have been better preserved, and one of my colleagues, the Rev. H. Berthoud, succeeded in identifying them more or less. His attempt to revive the nomenclature for use among civilised Natives did not, however, succeed any better than the attempt of the scientists of the French Revolution. 772 805 821

192 Amongst the Ba-Ronga those[1] which are still known are : *Nhlangula*,
805 the month in which the flowers are swept (hlangula) from the
trees, probably October, when all the minkuhlu, minkanye, etc.,
821 blossom ; *Ñwendjamhala*, the month in which the antelope
mhala, brings forth its young (November?) ; *Mawuwana*, when
the *tihuhlu* (p. 18) are plucked, because the people shout :
"Wuwana! wuwana!" in their joy at having plenty of almonds
to suck, corresponds to December. *Hukuri* is said to be the
month when the fruits of the *nkwakwa* (p. 17) are ripe (December
also?). *Ndjati*, or *ndjata*, viz., I am coming, is the time of *nwebo*,
when everyone is in his fields eating the new cobs of mealies, and if
you call a person he will answer : "I will come directly! Have
patience! I am busy here!" "This may be January or February.
Sunguti is also one of the summer months. *Sibamesoko*, the moon
which closes the paths, also called *Dwebindlela* or *Sibandlela*, is
easy to identify : it is February, the time when the grass grows so
high that it hides the paths leading to the nkanye trees. This is the
end of the bukanye time (I. p. 397). *Nyenyana*, *Nywenywankulu*
are the months of the birds (nyanyana), when one spends all
one's time in chasing the winged marauders from the fields
of sorghum and millet (March. April). *Mudashini*, viz., what
am I to eat? is the month when you have harvested so many
different kinds of food that you do not know which to choose :
this is the time directly after harvest, May or June. *Khotabushika*,
viz., when winter comes, probably June or July.

772 The *stars* are called *tinyeleti* (yin-tin) and play a remarkably
821 small part in the ideas of the tribe. The modern theory according
to which all religions started from the worship of stars, finds no
confirmation at all in the South African Bantu tribes.

821 It is taboo to try to count the stars. If any one attempts
784 to do so people will say to him : "Keep quiet or you will wet the
861 hut during the night!" Counting stars represents the torments
of the soul! If a child has been deprived of food as a punishment
for an offence, his parents will tell him, when he goes to sleep :
"Go and count the stars," viz., "you will feel hungry and not be
able to go to sleep ; you will be as unhappy as if you had to count
the stars."

[1] [names of moons -- Analyst]

I never heard a distinction made between fixed stars and planets. They are all called tinyeleti. The best-known is Venus, which bears many names. Not knowing that the evening and morning star are one and the same, they have given it different names. The evening star is *Gumbashilalelo*, the one which steals the evening meal, because it appears when people are eating it, or *khwekhweti*, the brilliant star, or *Nkata wa hweti*, the moon's husband (as the two are often seen close together); the morning star is called *Ngongomela*, or *Khwezu*, and is greatly lauded as the herald of day. It gives the warriors the signal for starting on a war-like expedition: the warriors can easily kill their enemies under cover of the darkness, and the sun will soon appear and help them to complete their victory. Travellers also start on their journey when they see it: the dawn will soon be here! Lit by its light, candidates for circumcision leave the village of the chief to go to the house of initiation. According to one of my informants (I. p. 75) there is a profound and mystic idea in this custom: Ngongomela announces the day; so little boys must be conducted by the morning star when they abandon their childhood and all its ignorance to enter the adult life with all its knowledge. It leads them from darkness into the light! So Venus plays a great part in Thonga customs. It is the great star. Notice the feminine suffix *eti* in one of its names. It may have been personified in former times. 821 772 881

The *Pleiades* are the only constellation which bears a name in Thonga. They call it *shirimelo*, the one which announces the tilling season, because, in fact, in the lands situated in the Tropic of Cancer, it rises in July or August, when tilling is resumed. I have not heard of any other constellation known to the Natives. They have no notion whatever of constellations: their mind does not seem to have tried to group the stars, or to have seen figures of animals, or objects, in the sky; their imagination in this domain is very poor, and they remain far behind the Oriental nations in this respect. 821 772

Falling stars are looked on as a bad omen. When they see one falling towards a certain point of the horizon, Natives think that a Chief must have died in the country towards which the 821 787 789

821 star is directing its course, and they have a formula of incantation
787 to get rid of the misfortune attending this phenomenon. They
789 say : "Thu! Thu! Nkulunkulu ndjuwee, famba psa ku u nga fa u ku bi." — "You great thing, go away alone (without me, leaving me behind) and die and disappear entirely." This is more an imprecation (shiruketelo) than an incantation. The syllable *thu* indicates, and accompanies, the emission of a little saliva. It is different from the sacramental *tsu*, employed to invoke the spirits of the ancestors : it is an insult. It is spitting *at* something, not an act of respect and an offering, like *tsu* (1). This is the Ronga formula ; the one used in Northern clans has the same meaning : "*Rura, rura weshe*" (Move, move alone!).

821 *Comets* greatly impress the imagination of the Thongas ;
787 they are called *shimusana*, or *nyeleti ya musana*, the star of dust, or *nyeleti ya nkila*, the star with a tail, and when they appear they also mean the death of a chief. People say : "See ! A chief has died, but they have not yet published the mourning" (I. p. 414). The star which is said to have appeared the year of the death of Manukosi was probably a comet. (See Report of the S.A.A.A.S. 1905, Vol. III, p. 232.)

772 These few superstitions and observations comprise all the Astronomy of the Thongas. The sidereal world is almost entirely outside the range of their preoccupations.

III. *Cosmographic and Meteorological Phenonomena.*

1) The Wind.

821 The wind is called *moya*, an interesting word which means
822 also spirit (the human breath and the spiritual part of man), and is applied to the acting, living agent, or to the smell, or taste, of some objects. For instance it is said of an alcoholic beverage

861 (1) They spit at a child who is causing an unpleasant smell, saying to him : "Thu!
578 u ya tisyela matjimba." — "Go away to ease yourself." Should you do this to a person older than yourself, he will say to you : "What ! you make *thu* to me (wa ndji thuka), you want me to ease myself !"

which has lost its strength that its "moya" has gone. It is also the moya which gives their potency to medical charms. 821 822

Another word for wind is *mheho*. Strong winds are called *shidzedze*. When they break trees and damage the mealies they are attributed to baloyi, wizards, who fight during the night, quarelling over the cobs.

One frequently hears about *timheho ta mune*, the four winds. They are called : *Ñwalungu*, the north wind, (a curious word perhaps connected with Balungu, the White men ; see later on) ; *Nyingitimu* (Ro.), or *Djonga* (Dj.), the South wind ; *Mupfanyaka*, the one coming from the plain of the black earth, the West Wind ; *Mfenya*, the sea breeze, coming from the East. Sailors who are great connoisseurs in this domain distinguish further the South Westerly wind, which they call *Mfenyakulu*, the great Mfenya. In Shiluvane, the West wind, which sometimes blows with great violence, coming down from the mountains of the Transvaal Plateau, is called *Burwa*, place of habitation of the Ba-Rwa (bu, locative prefix indicating a country). (Compare I. p. 18). Two other terms of the bu-ma class, also applied to East and West in all the clans, are : *Busha*, the spot where the sun rises (ku sha), the East, and *Bupeladambu*, the spot where the sun sets, the West. So there is no doubt that the Thongas possess the idea of the four cardinal points. 821 823 132

2) Native Geography.

The geographical notions of the tribe are, on the other hand, very scanty. As a rule, they do not think it possible to know a country, or place, where they have not travelled. Every one must compile his own geography. Hunters, and men engaged in commercial journeys, had some knowledge of the Spelonken (Bvesha), of Pietermaritzburg (Umgungundhlovu), of Kimberley (Dayiman), and now practically every grown-up Thonga has been to Johannesburg (Nkamben). But those who have always remained at home, women especially, show gross ignorance regarding their own country. I met some who were totally ignorant of the fact that the Nkomati River, which leaves the 823 815

823 Transvaal at Komati Poort (a place known to all), was the same as
815 the Nkomati which enters the sea near Morakwen, northwards of Lourenço Marques, at a distance of 60 miles from Komati Poort. It must be said, in excuse for them, that in Morakwen the river is called Morako (locative Morakwen) and thus many people have never been aware of the identity of the two!

If you wish to impress Natives greatly with your knowledge, tell them the names of all the countries of Thongaland in their geographical order, as you may have learnt them in conversation, or by studying the map. They will be amazed, and say: "What a wonderful traveller you are, knowing so many spots so far distant from each other!" The teaching of Geography in the schools tends, of course, to alter this state of things.

3) Earthquakes and Rainbows.

823 Earthquakes are not frequent in this part of the world; so they are rarely spoken of. Thongas have, however, a name for them, *shimbeti*. They do not give any explanation of them and believe that they are perhaps caused by the gods. I remember having once heard a mysterious sound accompanied by a slight tremor of the soil. It was during the Boer war and was, I think, caused by the blowing up of a bridge somewhere on the other side of the range. All the Natives covered their heads with their hands and seemed greatly impressed.

821 The *rainbow* is called *shikwangulatilo*, viz., the one which
778 removes the danger from the sky. Notice the stem *kwangula*, to inaugurate, which we have already met with, when dealing with pottery (p. 117). The sky after rain is compared to a new pot, from which the *nkangu* must be removed. But this is merely an expression. No one can say what the danger is that is thus removed; it is probable that the tribe had more precise ideas on the subject in former times, and that these have become obsolete. In some of the northern clans (Nkhabelane, Mathiye, Shiburi, Mongwe) the rainbow is called the Bow of Nyandziyo. Nyandziyo is said to be a man of the olden times who made the

rainbow ; he dwells in heaven and the rainbow is his bow. He it is who taught men the use of the bow. 773 821

The two great phenomena which mostly impress South Africans are lightning and rain, and of these you hear wonderful and endless stories!

4) Lightning.

This is called *lihati* (li-tin), and is said to be caused by a bird called *ndlati* (yi-tin). These two words, etymologically speaking, seem to be related to each other. They possess the feminine suffix *ti* which is met with in the forms *eti*, *ati*, *oti*. This bird is also called *nkuku wa tilo* amongst the Ba-Ronga, the cock of heaven, or *pele dja tilo*, the hen of heaven, and magicians know how to determine its sex when the bird has fallen. 821 125

The thunder is attributed either to the bird itself or, more frequently, to Heaven. The proper expression for "It thunders" is : "Tilo dji djuma" — "Heaven roars."

In the Northern clans those who practise magical arts add many other particulars to the story, some of which may have been borrowed from the Pedi magicians, who seem to possess a more complete explanation of the phenomenon. According to them, the *ndlati* (Pedi, *dali*) is a bird of four colours, green, red, black and white, which lives in the mountains, by preference at the confluence of rivers. The medicine-men of former times knew its hiding place and had even found the eggs of the bird in a nest floating on the water. When a thunderstorm breaks, the bird flies to heaven into the clouds ; there may be scores of them, but one only will be dangerous (lebya) and cause death. It rushes down to the ground, striking a tree on its way, tearing its bark and its wood, and throwing it down ; or it falls on a hut and burns it, or on a man and kills him. Having reached the soil, the bird can be caught, and I heard people seriously assert that four of these birds, unable to fly away, had been found the previous year in Sikororo country. Or the bird enters the ground, to a depth of two to three feet, and either remains there in its own form, or (this is the most common saying) deposits its urine (murundju), 821 825 795

821 which had caused the flash of lightning, and flies away back to
825 the mountains. The magician who understands the "treatment
791 of Heaven" comes and digs at the spot; there he finds a kind of gelatinous substance which solidifies after a little time. I possess a little of this curious drug given to me by a Pedi magician, by name Mudjumi; it resembles a piece of chalk, and is considered very valuable on account of its rareness, and because it is used in the manufacture of the wonderful medicine of Heaven. Should a village have been struck by lightning, the magician of Heaven will come and dig out this foreign body; if he finds it, the taboo is removed. If he does not, the whole village must move to another place. In the same way, it is taboo to warm oneself at a fire made of the wood of a tree that has been struck by lightning, or to use it as fuel.

The flute of Heaven.
Drawn by J. Wann.

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Happily this dreadful bird can be prevented from killing and burning by magical means. Both the Pedi Mudjumi and the Thonga Makasane possessed the enchanted flute, by which they could force Heaven — or the bird of Heaven — to spare them. Mudjumi having sold me his flute, I can describe it at length. It is made of a hollow bone five inches long, covered with Varan skin, filled at its larger extremity with a black substance like wax. Inside, to keep it clean, there is a vulture's feather. The bone is said to have been taken from the ndlati bird; the wax substance was made from powder obtained by drying up and pulverising a little of the heart, the eye, the bones, the feathers, and the flesh of the bird. In the wax are embedded three seeds of Abrus precatorius, the "lucky bean" well-known in South Africa, a round seed of a splendid coral colour with a black spot, very much used in Thonga magic. This addition of Abrus precatorius intensifies the sound of the flute and enables it to reach heaven.

reach heaven. The magician, seeing the thunderstorm approaching, climbs up the hill without any fear, blows in his flute: psee... psee... psee..., and shouts: "You! Heaven! Go further! I have nothing against you! I do not fight against you!" He may add in a threatening tone: "If you are sent by my enemies against me, I will cut you open with this knife of mine." The thunderstorm will then pass away! 821 791 789

This invocation to Heaven is curious, and we shall better understand it when studying the part played by Heaven in Thonga religion. Here I am merely considering the superstition as an attempt at explaining a natural phenomenon. And we may well ask: how is it possible for such absurdities to be believed, and firmly believed, by men who are not at all devoid of a sense of observation? The idea that lightning is a bird comes perhaps from the fact that its movements in falling from above resemble the evolutions of a bird in the air. After all the phenomenon is so sudden that this explanation could easily be accepted by the imagination of the savage. As regards the statements about the coagulated urine of the bird, I must admit that I was unable to understand on what they could be based, until I saw some samples of fulgurites found where lightning had struck the ground; the heat of the electric current vitrifies the sand, forming a kind of pipe, which enters the soil, where it ramifies to a certain depth. These fulgurites, though not perfectly answering to the description given by Native magicians, may have been the natural substratum upon which Bantu imagination built up all the other superstitions. 821

5) The problem of rain and the way Thongas deal with it.

All over the earth the question of rainfall is of primary importance, but this is especially the case in Subtropical Africa, even more than anywhere else. Rain may not fall during seven months, from April to October, and nobody worries about it. But if it fails in November and December, at the beginning of the rainy season, it is a dreadful misfortune, a calamity more serious 132 731 789

132 than any other. The life of every individual, and consequently
731 of the whole clan, is threatened. Famine will certainly follow,
789 as cereals can only be sown during these two months and famine means not only suffering and anguish, but often death, in a primitive tribe which is totally ignorant of trade with out-lying countries, and does not possess any means of conveyance for food bought in other lands. No wonder therefore that the imagination of the South African Native has invented ways and means of regularising the rainfall, and that rites, and charms, and all the powers of magic have been resorted to with a view to ensuring the precious rain to the tribe at the right time.

789 These methods may be classified in two categories : the rites which aim at removing the causes which are believed to prevent rain and the charms by which the rain is made to fall, irrespective of any preventing cause.

a) *The causes which prevent rainfall and the rites by which they are removed.*

821 The general view is that rain comes *from the gods* : "Psikwembu
789 psi nisa mpfula" — "the spirits of the ancestors cause rain to fall."
782 So, should the spring showers not come in due time, the first idea will be to offer a sacrifice to the ancestor-gods, especially if the bones consulted have revealed that the anger of the gods is the real
[533] cause. Men will go to the sacred wood where the ancestors have been buried, sing there an ancient mourning song (I suppose No. 15, page 286, is used for the purpose), and some of them will beat the graves with sticks. As regards the sacrifice, it consists of a black victim, or it may even be the offering of a living human being to the gods ; these rites will be described later on.

Or it may be that a certain individual, *a wizard*, endowed with magical power, or rather possessing enchanted drugs, prevents the rain from falling (a siba mpfula) through wickedness, or hatred of his countrymen. This is a rarer occurrence.

100 But the terrible calamity of drought is brought into direct

But the terrible calamity of drought is brought into direct
relation with some physiological phenomena which no one would 789
have thought of in this connection : the miscarriage of women 821
when the foetus has not been dealt with according to rule, the 843
birth of twins, the death of children not yet received into the tribe 845
by the ceremony of *boha puri* (I. p. 56) and not buried in wet 766
ground ; these are the great natural causes which prevent rain 171
from falling! I have met with this conception all over the
Thonga tribe. I found it also amongst the Pedis of the Trans-
vaal, who firmly believe it, and it would be most interesting to
know if Suthos, Zulus, and Hottentots have the same superstitions. Let me quote the *ipsissima verba* of Mankhelu, the great 789
medicine-man of the Nkuna Court. I shall never forget the 821
earnest tone of his voice, his deep conviction, when he uttered 843
to me the following words, as a kind of revelation : "When a 783
woman has had a miscarriage, when she has let her blood flow
secretly and has buried the abortive child in an unknown place,
it is enough to make the burning winds blow, and to dry up all the
land : the rain can no longer fall, because the country is no longer
right (tiko a ra ha lulami). Rain fears that spot. It must stop
at that very place and can go no further. This woman has been
very guilty. She has spoilt the country of the chief, because she
has hidden blood which had not yet properly united to make a
human being. That blood is taboo! What she has done is taboo.
It causes starvation."

"What then must be done?" — "The chief will collect his men and ask them : 'Are you in a normal state?' (lit. are you right?). They answer : 'Such and such a woman was pregnant but nobody knows what she has brought forth.' This woman will be arrested and told to go and show us where she has put it. The earth is dug up ; the hole is sprinkled with a decoction made of two drugs prepared in a special pot, the *mbendula* and *nyamale* ; the woman herself must wash her body every day with that medicine. Then a little of the earth taken from the hole will be scraped up and thrown into the river ; water drawn from the river will be poured into the hole : the country will be well again, and then the rain will come.

"Moreover, we, the medicine-men, after having sent old

789 women to the river to throw away the contaminated earth, order
821 them to make a ball of that earth, and to bring it back to us in
843 the early morning. We grind it, we put it into a pot where it
783 must remain for five days, and then we prepare the great drug to sprinkle the land. The medicine is put into oxen horns and they go to all the drifts, to the boundaries of the country, on the borders of the Nwebeti and of the Thabina rivers, on the road to Sibila's country, to Diskop (Leydsdorp); they must not however cross rivers. Our neighbours do the same on their own side. One of the girls digs the earth, the others dip a stick into the horn and sprinkle the drug into the hole. We also sprinkle the road on which these women have trodden, when they had their blood; we remove the misfortune caused by these women on the roads. The country is pure again. Rain can fall."

This is the purifying rite in the Nkuna clan. Mankhelu asserts that the Pedis do the same. He did not know if the custom existed amongst other Thonga clans. But Viguet described the same custom to me as being in force on the borders of the Limpopo, under the name of *mbelele*. The bones having revealed that the country is impure, the chief orders the mbelele : it is a period of mourning (nkosi) for the land. First the *phokolo*, or sacrifice of the black victim is performed (See Part VI). Then the women assemble. They must remove all their clothing, only putting some grass round their loins and, with a peculiar skipping step, singing a special song : "Mpfula nana" — "rain fall," — they go to all the spots where children prematurely born have been buried in dry ground, on the hills, take away what they find in the broken pots and collect all that impure matter in a secret place, so that children may see nothing of what they are doing. Water is poured on these graves in order to "quench them (timula)." On the evening of the same day they go and bury these impurities; this is
[813 done in the mud, near the river. No man must approach during
831] this operation : the women would have the right to strike the imprudent one and ask him questions on the obscene formulae of circumcision; the man would answer in the most impure words he could find, as all language taboos are suspended on that day; nakedness even is no longer taboo, "because," says Viguet,

"it is the law of the country!" Every one consents to the suspension of the ordinary laws! (1)

Amongst the Rongas, I did not hear of any connection between prematurely born children and rain. When the mbelele rite is performed, a mother of twins must lead the procession of women who draw water and pour it on the graves of the twins in order to secure the rain. They also clean all the wells (kuha tinhlobo), digging them afresh and removing any filth in the water. It may be that the corpse of a twin, if it has been buried in dry ground, will be dug out of its grave and buried again near the river, or they will go in procession and pour water on the grave. This will influence Heaven, which is killing the earth by the terrible heat of the sun. The burning October winds will cease and the rain will fall.

There is something mysterious about all these customs. Considered merely as ideas regarding Nature and natural phenomena, I believe their essential meaning to be this : — there are some cases of human birth which are taboo. While any birth is taboo, owing to the lochia, that of children prematurely born is doubly dangerous. Abnormal children, such as twins, children who have died before the "boha puri" rite (I. p. 56), in some clans also children who cut their upper teeth first, share this noxious character. They are a calamity for the whole land as they are connected with the mysterious power of Heaven, and so prevent the rain from falling. The great remedy for the evil, the only means of counteracting this influence, is to bury these children in wet ground. Should this not have been done, the chief must order these little corpses to be exhumed and buried near the river : this is the aim and object of the mbelele. If wet, these graves will cause no harm (2).

How did these extraordinary conceptions first originate ?

(1) This rite of *mbelele* shows striking analogies with the Passage rites which we have already often met with in Thonga customs. This is a special period, a mourning period for the land, says Viguet, a marginal period which, as such, is accompanied by obscene manifestations, both in speech and in absence of clothing.

(2) In the Maluleke clan, as previously mentioned, these three categories of children must be *cremated*, and foreigners dying in the midst of the clan are also burnt after their death, from fear that they might belong to one of these categories and so prevent the rain from falling, if they were buried in dry ground. The mbelele rite there is called *ndzelendzele*. Rangane describes it as follows : — Women collect the bones of twins,

What is the connection between abnormal births of human beings and the rain-fall? I think it can be found in the conception of Heaven which has inspired so many curious rites, and which I shall explain in the next chapter. So it is possible that, after all, the mbelele rite has a religious idea at its base.

b) *Rain charms.*

The removal of the corpses of abnormal children from dry ground and their burial near the river probably sometimes proves ineffective to produce rain. So Bantu magicians have invented a great many charms to obtain the greatly desired showers, and the power of the rain-makers is enormous. Our tribe does not seem to have developed this art as much as others. The Sutho-Pedis are masters in this domain and Mankhelu, who had been taught by them and had become a great and renowned rain-maker, revealed all his secrets to me. He possessed the drug and used it frequently, he said, having often been called in by Sutho chiefs dwelling in far distant districts, as far off as Pretoria. He assured me that he had met with so much success that these chiefs had given him oxen, horses, a waggon, precious beads, etc.! Where had he found this marvellous drug? At Rivimbi (in Venda : Luvimbi), a country north of Spelonken, not far from the Limpopo and to which he went, as far as I could make out, in 1865 or 1866. The Luvimbi people are the descendants of Luvimbi, (1) a chief of the old times (as old as Nkuna, says Mankhelu) who, after his death, went to heaven and became king of heaven ; he still exists there as a spirit, hearing and knowing everything that is done on earth. This Luvimbi is probably the same whom the Vendas call the first man, and concerning whom they have a number of traditions which I shall mention a little later.

and those of still-born children or those who died at birth; to these they add their old rags (perhaps the cloths used for their menses?); they bring all these impurities to the cross-ways and *burn them* there, singing impure songs, saying: "To-day is a great day! There is no taboo any more! If you prohibit anything, it will be an insult to the rain; it will not fall." The smoke of all that they have burnt constitutes a religious offering: now the country will be pure and the rain will fall. The conception prevailing among the Malulekes is somewhat different from that of the Rongas.

(1) I have published an account of the Venda traditions connected with Luvimbi or Raluvimbi in *The S. A Journal of Science*, April 1921, where more details will be found concerning this personage.

789 to be black. The heart was pierced with a puncheon and the blood flowed. He carefully washed the horns with the blood and smeared them later on (horola) with the "psanyi" found in the intestines of the animal. Then he took his *ntsiko*, viz., the two pieces of wood which served as his flint, poured a little of the powder into the notch of the female stick and made fire by the rapid friction described on p. 34. In the meantime Mankhelu prayed as follows: "Here are the drugs, Rivimbi of Tsome (Rivimbi's father)! Give us rain." Then he invoked his own gods, saying: "Go to Rivimbi for me and come along here all of you to make the rain fall." This performance is a "mhamba," a means of calling the gods, especially Rivimbi, "the master of this mhamba." After a while the wood began to burn; leaves of the "nembe-nembe" bush (Cassia petersiana) were placed on it and a black smoke rose and ascended to heaven. Then the clouds appeared and soon the thunderstorm broke. A feather of the ndlati bird of lightning was placed amongst the leaves as a protection against thunderbolts.

Mankhelu was absolutely convinced of the efficacy of this means of rain-making, and there seems to be more sense in this rite than in many others. To use the sea to cause rain to [821] fall, is not after all so absurd! I would not assert that Natives have a clear idea as to the formation of clouds, *mapapa* (Dj.), *matlabi* (Ro.), and know that the water from above comes from the water below, but at any rate they know that the sea is water and rain is [822] also water. To obtain rain by smoke rising from burning sea products is a procedure which is in keeping with one of the most common beliefs of primitive man, that like produces like, a belief which has found its expression in the famous principle of the old physicians: "Similia similibus curantur."

When practising his rain-making art at home, Mankhelu proceeded with less ceremonial pomp. After having consulted his bones, he took four leaves of the tjeke plant (p. 14), smeared them with the magical powder and exposed them to the rays of the burning sun. As soon as these leaves were fully dry, "Heaven began to roar" and the rain came.

[177] The great rain medicine is of Pedi or Venda origin. In addition

845 *made Heaven* (a hambi Tilo), to have *carried Heaven* (a rwi Tilo), to
772 have *ascended to Heaven* (a khandjiyi Tilo). This connection
789 established between her and Heaven is clearly seen in the *rain customs* previously described. Notice that the day following the
766 birth of twins is a *shimusi*, i. e. a day of rest. Nobody tills the ground, fearing that it would prevent rain from falling. When the *mbelele* takes place in Nondwane and Zihlahlà (p. 318), the half naked women who are sent to clean the wells take with them a mother of twins. This is no doubt in order to show them where the graves of twins are. But there is also another reason. In the sacred wood of Libombo there is a hole into which the woman is put ; her sisters then pour on to her the water which they have drawn from all the wells, till the hole is half full, and the water comes up to her breasts. This will cause the rain to fall. Why is this? No doubt because, the woman of Heaven being wet, Heaven itself will be wet. Spoon did not give this explanation himself, but, when I suggested it to him, he accepted it readily. For the same reason the graves of twins are watered. In certain cases water is poured on the graves of the ancestors also, because rain is attributed both to them and to Heaven, and this watering the graves is meant to induce either Heaven or the ancestor-gods to cause rain to fall. Hence again the precaution taken of burying twins in damp places, and of exhuming them in times of drought if they have been buried in dry ground (1).

845 The connection between twins and Heaven, so clearly to
772 be seen in these customs, appears again in respect to thunder-
● 821 storms, which, as we shall see, are another manifestation of Heaven.
789 When lightning threatens a village, people say to a twin : "Help us! You are a Child of Heaven! You can therefore cope with Heaven (mi kota Tilo), it will hear you when you speak." So the child

845 (1) In other clans this law is extended to children prematurely born, even though they
761 are not twins, and even to children who have not had the cotton string tied round their waist or who have cut their upper teeth first. On the other hand, among the Nkunas
772 no special connection seems to be established between twins and Heaven. These differences may be explained by the fact that all these abnormal cases were ascribed to
766 Heaven in former times, and the connection has been preserved in the various clans in respect to one or the other of these categories. Note that, in the song of the widows (*v.* p. 207), the king Heaven appears to have caused the death of the husband; this is another proof that Heaven was formerly considered the most frequent cause of death.

goes out of the hut and prays to Heaven in the following words : 845
"Go away! Do not annoy us! We are afraid. Go and roar far 772
away." When the thunderstorm has ended, the child is 821
thanked (1). His mother can also help in the same way, for has 789
she not ascended to Heaven? "She can speak with it, she is at it (or in it) — a li ku djone." (Spoon.)

We find in these rites a striking instance of the combination of the three forms of magic which have been explained above (p. 368). Heaven, rain, lightning, the mother of twins and the twins themselves form a connected whole. Action brought to bear on the mother of twins will therefore have its effect on Heaven ; this is *communionist magic*. This action consists in pouring water over her, (not only in plunging her into a lake). According to the principle of *imitative magic*, Heaven will thus be watered and will pour rain upon the earth. The act of the twin in commanding the lightning to spare the country is a case of *verbal magic*. All this would be logical enough and the conclusions perfectly legitimate if only the premisses were true!

Customs regarding twins vary from one clan to another. While 845
in one tribe they are put to death, in others their advent is considered an event of great happiness. This is the case in *Tembe and Maputju*, where women are said to wish for twins, and, if certain mothers have enjoyed this piece of good fortune, others ask them for some of the fat with which they have smeared their bodies, hoping by the use of the same ointment to obtain a like happy result. The hut is never burnt. The mother gives birth to the twins behind the hut (fukwen, I. p. 37). When it is time for her to re-enter her domicile, a hole is made in the wall at the back. The husband is excluded from the hut till the day of presentation to the moon (a ceremony which, in these clans, is not omitted in the case of twins). When he is again admitted, his wife strikes his legs with a stick, in order "to cure him" (ku mu

(1) Mrs. Junod, who was for years a missionary amongst the Fan or Pahouin of the French Congo, told me that, one day, after a tornado, the rainbow suddenly appeared in the sky. One of her female pupils at once ran to her, and hid her face in her schoolmistress'lap. On asking the reason of this fear the teacher was told that this girl was a twin, and twins dare not look at the rainbow. So the connection between Heaven and twins exists also in this tribe of Western Africa. 171

825 772 presides over all unaccountable and unavoidable phenomena of the atmosphere and of the life of the fields, or of human existence.

We have seen how the two sets of religious customs play their part side by side in the rites of rain-making. A similar coincidence may be noticed here. The removal of the "nunu," a rite which originated in the conception of Heaven, corresponds to the sacrifice of the chief in the Maluleke country, who gathers his sons together to pray to his ancestor-gods for the destruction of the vermin (psidi) which eat the mealies and endanger the harvest (p. 404).

3) Heaven, Storms and Robbers.

772 821 789 627 The most characteristic manifestation of Heaven is in the storm. According to the statement of the credulous Natives, after the women have finished cleaning the wells, and have watered the graves of twins, clouds appear, a whirlwind arises, and "Heaven begins to thunder" — "Tilo dji djuma." — I have already described Thonga ideas about thunder and the lightning bird (p. 313), and the powerful charm made from the flesh, feathers and urine of this marvellous creature! There is still another use made of this extraordinary drug. It is a powerful aid in *tracing thieves*! The magician who possesses this powder of Heaven, (Ñwagwalen of Shikhabele in the Mabota clan), when called upon to point out the thief, acts in the following way. Suppose some one finds that some valuable article has disappeared from his hut, he will say to his near relatives, to those whom he suspects of having committed the larceny : "Take care! If you don't confess, we will go to Ñwagwalen, who lives at Shikhabele!" This threat may possibly be sufficient to elicit an avowal. If not, the individual who has been wronged goes to the diviner, and asks his assistance ; the latter takes his "bag of tricks," his drugs, and his big black stick, i. e., the stick which he was carrying when he dug in the earth and found the urine of the bird, or the bird itself. A notch has been made in the stick, to show the depth of the hole in which he has discovered Heaven. Carrying these charms, he goes to find the chief. An audience being granted, he cries aloud : "O Chief! a theft has been

committed! Now, no one ought ever to rob me. What shall I do!" Then the Chief assembles his subjects and invites the guilty one to confess. If all deny it, Ñwagwalen starts off, with all his apparatus, for the place where the theft was committed, and "treats it medicinally" (a dahela mbangu). He spreads out his drugs, raises his stick in the air, and addresses Heaven as follows :

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We, Tilo, hi wene u ka ni mahlu, u bonaka busiku ni nhlekanhi!
Ba tekile psa nga ba kaneta! Tana u ba komba ba psña!
Oh Heaven, thou it is who hast eyes which see as well by night as by day...
They have stolen my goods, and they deny it! Come and discover them;
may they be consumed!

Then the clouds begin to gather, and, towards evening, the storm breaks. Lightning strikes the thief in his hut, and causes the stolen articles to reappear. — "I saw this happen at Hoñwana," declared Spoon, "but of late years such occurrences have been less frequent."

According to Camilla, the guilty person is sometimes punished by a terrible attack of vermin, of which he is unable to rid himself ; or he is confronted with several palm leaves, which, by a kind of supernatural judgment, turn into snakes, if he be truly guilty of having stolen the missing property.

The intervention of Heaven in the matter of detecting thieves is also an accepted fact in Khosen. My colleague, the Rev. A. Grandjean, told me of the following significant custom. When there is a storm, those who have missed any belongings go and stand at the door of the hut of the suspected thief, and it is quite possible that the inmate, terrified by the thunder, may throw out the stolen articles.

It may be concluded, from these perfectly authenticated customs, that the Natives attribute to Heaven the power of *omniscience*, more especially in respect to the detection of theft. The basket of bones is never consulted for this purpose. Moreover as Heaven guarantees property and makes people afraid to steal, it acts as a kind of *moralising influence*.

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I have also been told by witnesses from the Nkuna region that into the composition of the charm used to protect gardens against thieves, (p. 30) there enters a little powder obtained by burning a

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789 stem which has been struck by lightning, i. e. by Heaven ; or the
772 magician will burn branches of the same tree in the garden itself and bring them near to the stalks in order that these may be surrounded by the smoke emanating from them. If a thief enters the ga.den with evil intentions, "Tiło dji ta mu dlaya, i. e. Heaven will kill him."

4) Heaven and the Balungwana.

772 In 1894, as previously stated, locusts, which had not been
825 seen for some fifty years, made their appearance on the shores of
776 Delagoa Bay, and also in Natal and the Transvaal. The popular imagination was, naturally, greatly stirred by this unusual phenomenon, which was at first greeted with smiles and astonishment, but which, later on, was the cause of endless lamentation. I was one day walking up the hill of Lourenço Marques with an old man, the counsellor of one of the sub-chiefs of Tembe, a thoughtful and intelligent person, when he said to me, with great earnestness, in a low voice, as if referring to some important event : "Have you not heard that in Maputju two dwarfs (psimhu-ñwanyana) fell from Heaven ; a little man and a little woman. They came to say to the people : "Do not kill the grasshoppers! They belong to us!" This counsellor only repeated what all thought and were saying in all the native villages ; these grasshoppers, arriving unexpectedly from on high, were a manifestation of Heaven, just like the lightning, rain, twins, or the nunu, and these celestial beings had come to announce it to men.

772 But belief in the existence of *special personages* in Heaven
776 did not originate in connection with these terribly destructive
821 insects. The idea had been familiar, for a long time past, to the Rongas, and probably to all the Thongas. These personages were not only described as dwarfs, but also as balungwana (p. 352). They were said to fall from Heaven at the time of the great rains. Thus, Timoteo Mandlati told me people had seen some of them appear, a long time ago, in the Nkuna country, and that they had gone back to heaven in a cloud ; they live in celestial space, and when it thunders without any rain falling, the Nkunas say :

"Balungwana ba tlanga henhla" — "The balungwana are at play up there." Or it is they who are singing in heaven when there is a prolonged roar of thunder, saying : "wuwu-wuwu!"

When some one passes along the road, they dispute up above as to who he may be. One says : "It is so and so," and the others contradict him. Then they spit on the traveller, who is quite astonished to see some saliva on his hand. He mistakes it for rain, and looks up to the sky to see where the rain is coming from. The balungwana then have a chance to see his face, and the one who has guessed rightly says to the others : "You see! I was right."

In Bilen I heard of a man who prevented children from picking the beautiful red flowers of Tecoma capensis, telling them that the balungwana wanted them for dresses. The same individual believed that these little men would bring oxen to him.

The Rongas say that a little man fell on the hill of Lourenço Marques, near the house of Sithini, the son of Mashaken, just before the famous war between Mozila and Mawewe (I. p. 28), the rival claimants to the kingdom of Gaza, and that this dwarf came as a presage of the troubles which were to follow. "Lots of folk saw him" said Charlie in 1895 ; (he was then a man of some forty years of age). "We were too young to be allowed to look at him ; the Whites took him and carried him off to Mozambique." — Heaven is therefore inhabited. This is generally admitted, but the idea, from all that one can gather, remains very vague.

C. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THONGA RELIGION.

I. *The Origin of the Conception of Heaven.*

Ancestrolatry forms a clear, well-defined religion, with its theology (i. e., the ideas as regards the psikwembu), its sacrifices, and its prayers. The dim, mysterious ideas about Heaven, incorporated in or rather lying behind some of the most extraordinary rites of the tribe, bear a very different character. There is something incoherent, vague and

Another rite, which is observed after the hondlola only, is
756 the *kaza*, viz., the monthly purification of the exorcist. He
788 fills his gobo calabash with a decoction made of the roots of the
821 mphesu and ntjebe trees, drinks the whole, tickles his throat with a feather and vomits the medicine. "A tibasisa ndjen" — "he purifies his inside." This is done at every new moon. The connection between the possessed and the moon, which was first established by the fact that he had *thwaza*[1] as well as the moon, is maintained and intensified by this rite.

2) Propitiatory rites.

751 Besides these protective drugs, the exorcised wears a necklace
756 made of little pieces of a creeper called *mayambatju*, tied together with a munganazi string. See the second necklace in the
782 illustration. This is intended *to calm his gods*, and to scatter
168 them when they desire to come upon him with violence. This is indeed a great danger; the exorcised is liable to nervous attacks of a dangerous nature, especially during the first few weeks following the exorcism. Perhaps his song is heard in the distance. Then suddenly he is seized with madness, and furiously assaults his neighbours with the small hatchet, or the assagay used in the dances. People run away; or, on the contrary, they collect and begin to clap their hands, and make their infuriated companion dance and sing his own song. This may help to dispel the spirits, and calm him down. Sometimes, feeling uneasy, foreseeing a crisis, the poor man himself asks them to sing. But he may also be led, in his frenzy, to the bush, far away, unconscious, quite mad, tearing his clothes and his skin with the thorns. This often happened to Nwashinhwana. Her husband then followed her, and, when the crisis was over, saw her fall down exhausted and brought her home; there, having returned to her senses, she became very sad and wept bitterly. So, in order to avoid being tormented, the exorcised propitiate their spirits; they worship them, in truth, and this gives birth to *a new religion* totally different from ancestrolatry, which has its rites and its duties.

756 As already pointed out, the exorcised has *his own altar* in his
778 hut. It is the forked branch, round which a circle of raised clay
782

[1] [See p. 498 -- Analyst]

idea of defilement through death. *Adultery* is taboo because the husband fears "the bad bloods" by which his wife may have been contaminated through her misconduct. In as far as respect for the *totem* is considered necessary for the maintenance of the health of the clansman, I would also include the taboos of this order in the physiological category ; these are, however, very few in number amongst the Thongas (I. p. 366). 784

b) Another variety of the same category are *the taboos connected with growth or change of condition*, or *with the various initiations* through which a Native may be called on to pass. The whole life of primitive man consists, as has already been stated, in a succession of stages ; he must proceed from one to the other through ceremonies in connection with which a number of taboos are to be noticed. The individual who ascends from an inferior stage to a superior one, always passes through a marginal period by which he is separated from the former and received into the latter. In this case the seclusion is not due to defilement properly speaking ; it is connected with the idea of *growth*. Hence the taboos of *tying the cotton string*, (I. p. 56), *weaning* (I. p. 58), when passing from infancy to childhood, *puberty*, when entering upon adult life through circumcision, *marriage* (p. 124), when being received into the group of married people ; initiation into the society of the possessed, and into the profession of magician, or diviner, is attended with similar taboos. 561 784

All the taboos of this category seem to have been actuated by the idea of danger accompanying ritual impurity, or passage from one condition to another.

2) A second category of taboos, much less numerous, are the *cosmic taboos*. Nature prohibits certain acts ; if they are committed, rain will not fall, and the community will suffer. The prohibition of cutting the roots at the new moon (p. 306), of tilling the fields when a shower falls in the morning (p. 28), of warming oneself at a fire of parasitic plants and at the ntjhopfa (p. 18), and some agricultural taboos belong to this category. Some of the most severe physiological taboos, those connected with twins and with unlawfully buried children, become cosmic, inasmuch as they prevent rain from falling (p. 317). 821 784